

1999 Session of the Indiana General Assembly

State budget provides tax cuts, funding for education

The new state budget will make a very real difference in the lives of many Hoosiers. Some of the highlights include:

Program Funding

- Public education: Statewide total formula funding increase of an average of 4.7 percent in calendar years 2000 and 2001, with minimum guarantees of funding increases of at least 2.5%. Funding was increased for both at-risk and academic honors programs. Local schools and libraries also received \$76 million in technology funding.
- CHOICE: \$5 million increase per year in funding for home health care for the elderly
- Higher education: appropriations were increased by 7.0 percent in fiscal year 2000 and 4.7 percent in 2001
- Vocational education: incentives for school corporations to provide programs in which high employment demand exists
- A new \$50 million 21st Century Research and Technology Fund that will promote high-tech industries located in Indiana
- Social services: Funding for the seriously mentally ill is increased by \$3 million in 2000 and \$6 million in 2001. MRDD programs will receive an additional \$9 million in funding.

Savings to Taxpayers

- Elimination of county welfare fund and county welfare administration funds from local property taxes (two-year savings: \$67.6 million);
- Elimination of inventory tax for 87 percent of farms and businesses (two-year savings: \$129.6 million).



Rep. Brown speaks during debate on the House floor.

Hoosiers will save \$672 million over next two years in tax cuts

- Homeowners: a new income tax deduction for property taxes up to \$2500
- Senior citizens: an increase in the income tax deduction from \$1000 to \$1500 and an increase in the property tax deduction for seniors from \$1000 to \$2000
- Dependent children: an increase in the income tax deduction from \$1000 to \$2500
- Small businesses: property tax “add-back” repealed so business owners can deduct the amount of their property taxes from their state income taxes
- Renters: increased the income tax deduction from \$1500 to \$2000

Enhanced penalties

**Emergency vehicles** -- Any driver approaching any stationary emergency vehicle with flashing lights needs to change lanes if possible or reduce speed. Violation is a Class A infraction, and the driver’s license can be suspended for any driver who fails to observe the provisions of this law and causes damage, injury or death.

**Drunk driving** -- It is now a Class A misdemeanor for a person to operate a motor vehicle with a blood alcohol level of at least .15 percent. In addition, a court would be required to sentence an individual found guilty of operating a vehicle while intoxicated to serve either jail time or community service if they have previous offenses. The bill also asks for a summer study of the state’s open container law to see whether revisions are needed.

Porter County Funding District 3

Build Indiana Projects

Beverly Shores Walking Path -- \$50,000

Hoosier Boys Town -- \$25,000

Additional \$200 million approved for Indiana roads

I was pleased we appropriated an additional \$200 million from the state general fund for local roads over the next two years. This is in addition to the regular funding from gas taxes. Many of you have indicated your strong desire to see us do more road improvements throughout the state.

The amount for each city is in addition to the total for the county. The amount appropriated to each city is based on the population of the city.

Porter County -- \$2.5 million

Beverly Shores -- \$82,266

Chesterton -- \$297,703

Portage -- \$854,298

Porter -- \$126,646

How to Contact Representative Charlie Brown

RESIDENCE

9439 Lake Shore Dr.  
Gary, IN 46403  
e-mail: R3@ai.org

LEGISLATIVE OFFICE

200 W. Washington St.  
Indianapolis, IN 46204  
1-800-382-9842

Education & Children

**Child Custody** -- Courts may now give equal consideration to long-term guardians such as grandparents or relatives other than parents when awarding custody of a child if it is in the best interest of the child. Under the old system, courts placed priority on placing a child with his or her parents.

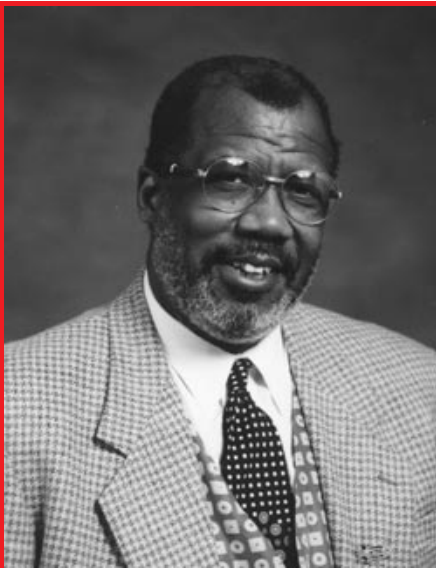
**Tobacco** -- Legislation has been enacted which will help prevent teenage access to tobacco products. Retailers who sell products to minors will be penalized, all billboard advertising of tobacco will be banned, vending machines will be removed from areas accessible to young people, and children and teenagers will be prohibited from entering tobacco specialty stores.

**Educational Standards** -- A roundtable has been created to develop educational standards for Indiana students. Standards would be set for each grade level, easily comparable to national and international standards, written in an easy-to-understand manner, and distributed to students and parents.

**Autistic Children** -- The State Department of Health will extend additional care, services and materials to autistic children less than 21 years of age. This will ensure that autistic children will receive the same assistance as children with special health care needs.



Rep. Brown discusses legislation with Rep. Paul Robertson.



Rep. Charlie Brown

200 W. Washington St.  
Indianapolis, IN 46204-2786

Call the Statehouse Toll-Free  
1-800-382-9842

Bulk Rate  
U.S. Postage  
**PAID**  
Indiana House of  
Representatives

House publications available

The following publications can be requested free of charge from my Statehouse office by calling toll-free 1-800-382-9842:

*Relax . . .* -- This informational booklet for senior citizens discusses a variety of issues, from taxes to health problems to leisure activities.

*Higher Education* -- A 24-page publication for those interested in pursuing a higher education degree, detailing many Indiana colleges and universities as well as occupational and vocational schools.

*Guide to State Agencies* -- This booklet details various agencies within Indiana state government, listing phone numbers, functions and general areas of responsibility for each of the state agencies.

*Hoosier Fun and Facts* -- Designed for elementary school-aged children, this information and activity book teaches students about their state through a combination of text, puzzles and other educational activities.

Is the address label on this mailing correct?

Please check the address label on this mailing for accuracy. If there are any errors or if you are receiving duplicate mailings, please contact my office at 1-800-382-9842. Every effort will be made to correct the mistake.

I appreciate your assistance in keeping the mailing list updated. This will ultimately result in more efficient delivery and substantial savings to taxpayers across the state.

State Phone Numbers

State Information . . . . .	1-800-457-8283
Indiana House . . . . .	1-800-382-9842
Indiana Senate. . . . .	1-800-382-9467
Governor's Office. . . . .	317-232-4567
Secretary of State . . . . .	317-232-6531
Motor Vehicles. . . . .	317-233-6000
Natural Resources. . . . .	1-800-622-4931
Utility Regulatory. . . . .	1-800-851-4268
State Tourism . . . . .	1-800-289-6646
Department of Correction. .	1-800-680-5889
Department of Education . .	317-232-6611
Department of Health . . . .	317-233-1325
Family & Social Services . .	317-233-4454

Brown votes to protect consumers

**Stopping “slamming” & “cramming”** -- House Enrolled Act 1628 gives the Indiana Utility Regulatory Commission (IURC) authority to impose a civil penalty on a telecommunications provider if the provider has violated the law or rules prohibiting the unauthorized switching of telecommunications providers or the billing of unauthorized services -- known as "slamming" and "cramming."

"Slamming" is the term used to describe the telecommunications practice of changing a person's phone service provider without the customer's permission. "Cramming," on the other hand, refers to billing for services not authorized by the customer.

**Telephone solicitation** -- House Enrolled Act 1434 imposes stricter regulations on professional solicitors and fundraisers while protecting telephone customers.

The act requires a professional solicitor to disclose several items to the attorney general, including the portion of a contribution that goes to the solicitor and the portion that actually goes to the charity.

It also requires professional solicitors to disclose many of those items at the beginning of each call, including the name of the company and the phone number and address of the location from which the call is being made.

**Mental health insurance parity** -- Legislation was enacted to ensure that any health coverage plan offering mental illness benefits must

have similar treatment limitations and financial requirements as other medical conditions.

**Annexation** -- Senate Enrolled Act 167 will give residents the right to argue in court that they do not need to be annexed because they already have adequate police and fire protection and road maintenance. In addition, citizens can argue that they will suffer significant financial impact from the annexation.

It also requires the municipality to demonstrate that the annexation is in the best interest of the people in the affected area.

Senate Enrolled Act 167 will change existing state laws covering remonstrance petitions against annexation. Residents will have 90 days to file a remonstrance, and the petition must contain the signatures of 65 percent of the affected property owners in order to proceed. Present law requires 75 percent of the owners to sign.

**Public records** -- The office of the public access counselor was created through legislation. This office will allow a person who files a complaint about being denied access to records by a public official to recover attorney fees, court costs and other reasonable expenses if a court rules in that person’s favor.

**Recycling** -- House Enrolled Act 1163 extends the life of the Indiana Institute on Recycling to June 30, 2001.